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FROM USMISSION TO UNESCO PARIS

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TAGS: [SMIG](#) [UNESCO](#) [UN](#) [IOM](#)

SUBJECT: UNESCO: MEETINGS ON MIGRATION, "RIGHT TO THE CITY," AND THE HUMAN SECURITY PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. On June 14 DCM and HHS Attache met with members of the UNESCO secretariat to discuss UNESCO's Migration without Borders and the Right to the City programs. Paul de Guchteneire, Chief of the International Migration Section, and Wataru Iwamoto, Director of Social Sciences Research and Policy, discussed UN SG Kofi Annan's proposal for a forum on International Migration and Development, as well as UNESCO's possible role in the forum. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNESCO will hold a conference of experts on migration museums; U.S. delegates discussed Ellis Island as a model. The conversation then turned to the "Right to the City." A UNESCO program specialist explained the meaning of the expression and revealed that the staff has been trained to take a rights-based approach in all their work. In a separate meeting, Mr. Hoff met with Rene Zapata, of UNESCO's Bureau of Strategic Planning, to discuss the Human Security Program. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: A UN FORUM, A UNESCO CONFERENCE

2. According to de Guchteneire, the Secretary General is organizing a High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in New York on September 14-15, 2006 and is recommending the creation of a UN Forum on the subject. De Guchteneire also said UNESCO is working on a document that will set out the role UNESCO seeks to play in the forum, and noted that it will involve the relationship between cultural diversity and integration of immigrant populations (social cohesion). He felt this was key issue that the cultural diversity convention had failed to address. The UNESCO Secretariat will consult with Member States on UNESCO's role.

3. De Guchteneire added that UNESCO and the IOM will work together to promote development of a new type of museum on migration that does not just take an historical approach. U.S. delegates spoke of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum; Mr. de Guchteneire was aware of the site but not of the interactive project that has been created there. IOM and UNESCO will hold a conference of experts about migration museums in Rome, most likely October 23-25. As a follow-up to the meeting, Mr. de Guchteneire sent the U.S. delegation a draft of the organizational document for the meeting, which cites the Ellis Island Immigration Museum as the example for migration museums worldwide. (Comment: The High Level Dialogue on September 14-15 in New York may be an opportunity to showcase the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Mission will try to insist that a U.S. expert be invited to the Rome meeting.)

"RIGHT TO THE CITY" AND A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO EVERYTHING

4. The meeting turned to the subject of the "Right to the City." U.S. delegates expressed their continuing concern with the phrase, which, they noted, is being used in connection with the World Urban Forum 3 (which is taking place June 19-23, 2006 in Vancouver). Mr. Iwamoto introduced Brigitte Colin, a UNESCO program specialist on the issue. She explained the ideas behind the wording, saying that it had to do with the rights and obligations of the citizens of a city. Ms. Colin also mentioned that the UN had provided training for members of the section by the United Nations System Staff College in Geneva that emphasized that UN staff should use the concept of a "rights based approach" rather than a "needs based approach" (the language that accompanies the problematic questionnaire sent out on the Right to the City). When questioned on what basis they were claiming the need to use a rights based approach, she said she was told the language was included in last fall's World Summit outcome document. (Comment: We have looked at the document and do not find where it says this.) U.S. delegates also expressed concern about the phrase Inclusive City (which UN-Habitat uses), stating that it could be interpreted to imply a socialist agenda.

THE HUMAN SECURITY PROGRAM: AN UNCLEAR APPROACH

5. HHS Attache Hoff later met with Rene Zapata, of the UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning, to discuss the Human Security Program. Zapata emphasized the inter-sectoral nature of human security. He said the USG intervention at the December meeting was extremely helpful, and changed the approach UNESCO was taking. However, the way in which the approach had changed was unclear to Mr. Hoff. Mr. Hoff expressed concern about the possibility of UNESCO's having consultants write the upcoming report without Member States' review,

and stressed the U.S.' concern over the inappropriate political statements in the book on Arab security. The next concrete steps for the Human Security Program are regional meetings: ASEAN, Arab league (preceded by experts meetings), and then, but somewhat delayed, Africa. Mr. Zapata also touched on the effect of UN reform on human security.

16. Comment. The Social and Human Sciences Sector is appearing to be responsive to U.S. concerns-it recognizes the validity of U.S. concerns about "Migration without Borders" and has deleted that phrase from their website; and it has downplayed use of "Right to the City," although the phrase is still being used, particularly in connection with the World Urban Forum. However, the mind set behind these terms is still of course worrisome, and each discussion reveals new expressions of it (such as the information about training to use "the rights based approach." We will continue to oppose particular initiatives that are based on this rights based approach (but given the Mission's limited resources it is difficult to keep up with all of them). But this has to be addressed systemically, in particular by opposing efforts by the Secretariat to promote or create these rights by new normative instruments or by expanding existing ones. We can only hope that the present review of natural and social science programs at UNESCO will redirect these programs in a more positive direction.

17. Comment continued. Since we cannot find a mention of the need to take a rights-based approach in the summit outcome document, we are curious on what basis the United Nations System Staff College in Geneva is conducting this training and if they are doing the same thing in other UN organizations. One bright note, UNESCO's appraisal of the cultural diversity convention's failure to address social cohesion may also provide a good opportunity to point out one of the convention's most serious flaws.
OLIVER